awmakers eye business tax to fund schools

BY TIM RICHARD STAPP WRITER

SYTIM RICHAID
STATE WAITER

Mischigan's business people are deeply divided over the chief tax they pay, especially now that it's they pay, especially now that it's likely to go up.

"The single business tax productions will be asked to pay more, one way or another, because the state Legislature has repealed 56 billion of local property taxes for schools.

"There's a real push for the Legislature to fund schools for schools.

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will be part of that activity," said Munsell, who wants to produce recommendations for restructuring SBT by Sept. 14, if it's to be done at all.

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Herself a certified public accountant, Munsell said the goal will be to have business make up a proportional part of the replacement revenue or less. "We need to deal with it this calendar year," she said.

Rep. Berbara Dobb, R-Union Lake, predicted lawmakers will allow school districts to reinstitute some of the repealed \$6 billion in property taxes. Reason: The Michigan Constitution prevents the Legislature from raising taxes by more than \$3.8 billion.

Small-business people from Southfield and Belleville panned the current SBT as a tax on em-ployment. Financial, computer and auto giant spokesmen like SBT the way it is.

and auto giant spokesmen like SBT the way it is.

"Ease up on products made in Michigan," said Charles Hood of HLF Furniture Inc., Belleville maker of office furniture and employer of 75. Hood said non-wage costs such as health care, unomployment insurance and workers' compensation should be removed from the tax base.

"There should be an incubation period for small, start-up businesses," said Hood drawing great appleause from the audience.
Faul Pickell of Pick Publications in Southfield called SBT "a barrier to growth and profitabili-

ty. It's an unfair burden to small business. It's very complicated er and drive them into the beck-and requires a CPA. It hampers reinvestment in one's own busi-bring states, Muhn said.

reinvestment in one's own business."

A "reasonable business profits ax" would be preferable, said Pickell, whose firm produces business directories.

"Let us know how you want to pay the business cost of education in Michigan," said Munsell.

Linda Joliedeur, a Southfield entrepreneur representing the National Association of Women Business Owners, replied, "Rather than look at it negatively—like what do you want to pay?—we need to improve the quality of education." She deplored Southfield's spending \$9,000 per student a year and raising teachers' wages 8 percent as soon as voters approved a property tax increase.

"Taxes are a price you pay for

voters approved a property cas accesse.

"Taxes are a price you pay for doing business," said Mark Brooks of the Cranbrook Group in Bloomfield Hills. "If you add a price to labor, you're going to get less employees."

SBT an incentive

Jeffrey Muhn of Compuware Co. in Farmington Hills called SBT"an incentive to the software industry" in which Michigan plays a dominant role. Gross re-ceipts and profit taxes, which lawmakers are considering, would

boring states, Muhn said.

John Neberle of Ford Motor
Co.'s Dearborn headquarters
made a strong case for not tinkering with SBT.

"In 1975 Michigan replaced
seven other taxes with SBT. The
corporate income tax was 7 percent. Michigan had a tax on not
worth—a real minefield because
it taxed reserves for health care.
We were in court more often than
not," he said.

"We know when you would be

"We knew when we went to SBT there'd be trials and tribula-tions," Neberle said, citing major state Supreme Court decisions over 18 years. "We're close to the end. We've got rid of a lot of irri-

tants to worldwide manufacturing. The tax system has served us well in this state. We should spend time on how we improve education." Republican members are Munsell, Dobb and Deborah Whyman of Canton. Democrata are occhair Mury Brown of Kalamazoo, Profit of Ypsilant and John Freeman of Madison Heights.

State treasurer Doug Roberts described SBT as a consumption-type, value added tax based on the difference between the value of a product at sale and the cost of inputs. "Since value-added reflects the amount of business accts the amount of business activity a firm performs, it is a good proxy for the amount of govern-ment services received by a firm," Roberts said in written com-

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Fund-raiser bike tour planned

Bicyclists of all ages will descend on northern Michigan's Leclanau Peninsula Sept. 11-13 on a fund-raising trip for the American Lung Association of Michigan.

of Michigan.

Besides enjoying the late summer beauty, cyclists will get all the health benefits that come with physical fitness, said Darlene Bidwell of the ALA office in Southfield.

"On day one, you will travel the northern area of the Leclenau Peninsula, visiting the towns of Northport and Suttons Bay and the fishing community of Leland," she said.

"On the second day, you will explore the western area of the peninsula, including Gion Arbor and Empire, and you can even climb the Sleeping Bear Dunce.

Duncs.

"For those who seek adventure, consider a day of hiking on Manitou Island. On the last day of your cycling trip, you can visit the towns of Cedar and Maple City, where you may want to catch a quick bite at one of the local restaurants."

Information on how to participate in ALA's "Leclanau Lakeshore Loop" bike trek is available from 1-800-678-LUNG.



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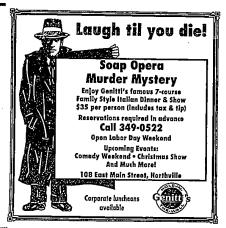


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